Best Management Practices

Primary Goal

YOU CAN LEAD A HORSE TO WATER

The primary goal of equine "Best Management Practices," or "BMP's" is to eliminate or limit excess phosphorus, nitrogen and other pollutants produced by horses and livestock from entering canals and water ways through inappropriate pasture and stable practices.

Besides ensuring better water quality for you, your livestock, neighbors and the Everglades - these equestrian BMPs will also help you maintain better pastures, improve livestock health and increase property values. Additionally, adopting BMP's will help protect you from related code enforcement problems.

Phosphorus is not the only stormwater pollutant in our regional drainage canals. Think about how many people live here and the household habits that my contribute pollution to the region's stormwater . What do you think rainwater picks up as it rolls across parking lots, lawns and pastures before draining into the stormwater systems like a swale, pond or canals? Jus imagine chemicals leaking for vehicles on roadways; inappropriately applied fertilizers and pesticides on urban landscaping; or, mismanaged pert and livestock waste. It all adds up...

Horse owners, equestrian facility managers, the South Florida Trail Riders Association, and Florida Farm Bureau have worked together with the South Florida Water Management District, the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) to develop these recommenced practices.

Water Quality Challenge

South Florida's

LIVING CLOSE TO THE EVERGLADES REQUIRES EVERYONE TO BE A WISE RESOURCE MANAGER

Our regional system of damage canals provides flood control and allows us to live in areas that were once part of the Everglades. Stormwater from the 50 to 60 inches of rain we receive annually drains across our property collecting pollutants before it is discharged into drainage canals. Depending on where you live, stormwater in nearby drainage systems is other discharged to the Atlantic or the Everglades.

Any number of pollutants can be found in stormwater, but in southeast Florida where urban drainage canals discharge into the Everglades, the stormwater pollutant of concern is primarily phosphorus - a nutrient most commonly found in fertilizers. Stormwater discharges into the Everglades with phosphorus concentrations higher than 10 parts per billion (ppb) can upset the natural balance of the Everglades system.

Achieving the restoration of the Everglades will require a significant reduction in the amount of phosphorus in stormwater. Improving the water quality of stormwater runoff is the responsibility of everyone that contributes pollutants.

Imagine 10 black marbles in a pool of a billion white marbles - that's what 10 parts per billion looks like. Although it is OK for drinking water to have higher concentrations of phosphorus, the Everglades is naturally a "nutrient-poor" natural system. Even small amounts of unnatural nutrients can upset the native plants and animals that depend on the historic river of grass.

Good Horse Sense

BMP process

BE WISE AND USE THE BMP'S TO MANAGE SAFELY

EXAMINE YOUR PROPERTY

To begin the BMP process, examine your property or where your livestock is boarded. Make a sketch showing property boundaries, fences and confinement areas, buildings, wells, septic system and drain field, wetlands and ponds, bare ground, and weeds and Non-native and invasive plants and vegetation. Also consider areas that are landscaped or pastured, neighboring land uses, ground contours and soil type.

Studying the property sketch, think about possible pollution sources. Is there a possibility that animal waste from the property might be entering canals and waterways? Could soil erosion on the property be making its way to neighboring properties or nearby surface waters? Is the pasture pond connected to a nearby canal lake or wetland? Is the correct fertilizer being used for South Florida soils an semi-tropical environment - and what about pesticide usage, and the current system of waste management?

REFER TO THE GOOD HORSE SENSE MANUAL